

## SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY 2007–2008 ANNUAL REPORT



*"With sustainability the focus,  
SNC is protecting our fragile  
environment while supporting  
Sierra communities and  
rural economies."*

**Kim Carr**  
**Mt. Whitney Area Manager**

Woman Jogging With Dog  
Photograph by Bob Kingman  
Mt. Lassen Area Manager

## BUILDING THE ORGANIZATION (2005–2007)

### The Inaugural Governing Board

The SNC's inaugural Board played an important role in the formation of the organization. The Board provided direction in the creation of the SNC budget, hiring of the Executive Officer and oversight of the initial outreach efforts.

#### Inaugural Boardmembers

Mike Chrisman, Secretary for Resources  
Tom Campbell, Director, Department of Finance

#### Public Members

Bob Kirkwood, Governor Appointee  
B.J. Kirwan, Governor Appointee  
Carol Whiteside, Governor Appointee  
Byron Sher, State Senate Appointee

#### North Sierra Subregion

Brian Dahle, Supervisor, Lassen County

#### North Central Sierra Subregion

Kim Yamaguchi, Supervisor, Butte County

#### Central Sierra Subregion

Helen Baumann, Supervisor, El Dorado County

#### South Central Sierra Subregion

Lee Stetson, Supervisor, Mariposa County

#### East Sierra Subregion

Linda Arcularius, Supervisor, Inyo County

#### South Sierra Subregion

Bob Waterston, Supervisor, Fresno County

### Overview

Following the signing of AB 2600, efforts began to make the SNC a reality. One of the first steps was the appointment of the inaugural Board. Governor Schwarzenegger, Assembly Speaker Núñez and the Senate Rules Committee made their respective appointments in early 2005, as did counties in each of the six Subregion's. The Board held its first organizational meeting on May 12, 2005 in Sacramento. Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman was elected Chair of the Board at that time.

Video: [▶ Signing of AB 2600](#)

During this period, the SNC was supported primarily by staff at the Resources Agency and the California Tahoe Conservancy. A budget for the organization was developed and adopted through the State budget process for fiscal year 2005–06.

During the summer of 2005 six public outreach workshops were held throughout the Region (one in each Subregion). The purpose of the workshops was to gain initial public input as to the direction that the new organization should take. Over 200 attendees provided substantial comments and suggestions. This input has been used as the SNC developed its organizational structure, Strategic Plan and Grant Program.

In October 2005 the initial staff of the SNC was hired. At that time, Jim Branham was hired as the Executive Officer and Eileen Pope as the Administrative Services Manager.

The SNC continued to be assisted by the Tahoe Conservancy and extensively used part-time employees (retired annuitants) in the development of the organization. Permanent staff was hired as roles were clearly defined, continuing into 2008.

### The Strategic Plan

In January 2006 the SNC began development of a Strategic Plan to guide operations over the ensuing five years. The plan was created through an open and transparent process that included six public workshops (one in each Subregion). A number of substantive changes were made to the draft plan in response to a variety of public comment. The [final plan](#) was approved by the Board on July 20, 2006. The plan describes the vision, mission and guiding principles of the organization and provides a foundation for program development and activities to achieve the SNC's vision and mission. It also contains a number of key actions to be implemented as part of developing the organization and programs.

### Serving the Region

Videos: ▶ [Bob Kingman, SNC Mt. Lassen Area Manager](#)  
▶ [Cheryl Belcher, Executive Director, Sierra-Cascade Land Trust Council](#)

In early 2006 the SNC also initiated a process to identify a suitable headquarters office for its operations. Criteria were developed to guide in the selection of a site within the Region that would best meet the needs of the Region and the organization. After considering proposals from seven different communities, the SNC selected Auburn in Placer County. The headquarters office has been located there since June, 2006.

Later in that year, a process was undertaken to identify locations for field offices to serve the communities in the Region. Given the vast area and diverse geography, the SNC carefully considered locations that would best serve the citizens of the Region. As a result of this process staff members are located in Mariposa, Susanville and Bishop. The Auburn office is the primary location serving the three most northern Subregions, while the Mariposa office serves the same function for the three most southern

Subregions. The staff members in Bishop and Susanville are located in federal office buildings and provide the primary point of contact within those areas.

Through the course of fiscal years 2006–07 and 2007–08, the SNC continued to hire staff to carry out its mission. A total of 22 [staff members](#) now work out of the four office locations.

### Establishing an Identity

In late 2006 the SNC initiated a contest among high school students in the Region for the development of the organization's logo. The contest served as a great opportunity for young people to “show off” their design skills, while at the same time learn about the mission of the SNC. Over 300 designs were submitted from students from around the Region. After an evaluation process, the SNC Board selected the [winning entry](#) on May 3, 2007. The winner was Orion Day from Sonora, California. Another of Orion's submissions was used as the basis of the SNC license plate design.

### The Importance of Education and Communication

Recognizing the importance of the Region to all Californians, the SNC developed the [Education and Communications Plan](#) during 2006. The plan outlines activities that the SNC and its partners can undertake to help decision makers and residents in the region and throughout the state better understand the importance of the Region and the actions necessary to protect it. Implementation of the plan is ongoing.

In January 2007 SNC staff participated in Governor Schwarzenegger's “[Green Dream](#)” event. This outreach opportunity generated local media coverage with a focus on the SNC “snowpeople” emphasizing the potential

## BUILDING THE ORGANIZATION (2005–2007)

effects of climate change on the Sierra snowpack (and California's water supply). The SNC also provided the perspective of John Muir, channeled through inaugural Boardmember Lee Stetson ([listen](#)).

### Investing in Sierra Nevada Watersheds and Communities

In November 2006 voters approved [Proposition 84](#), the *Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006*. Included in this bond measure was a \$54 million allocation to the SNC to support projects to improve watershed health throughout the Region. In anticipation of a portion of these funds being appropriated in the 2007–08 State budget, the SNC developed the *Program Guidelines* and the *Grants Guidelines*. This process involved a total of 19 public workshops throughout the Region ([view map](#)), and workshops in Sacramento and San Francisco. Following numerous changes to the initial draft based on public comment, a final set of guidelines was approved by the Board on July 26, 2007.

Also in 2006 AB 84 was signed into law providing an opportunity for organizations such as the SNC to develop a specialized license plate. Funds generated from the sale of such a plate would be available for use by the SNC to carry out its mission. The Board approved a license plate design and the organization entered into a partnership with The Sierra Fund (a non-profit organization) to develop and implement a program to sell 7,500 plates (the number needed for the state to produce the plates). At this time, the effort is ongoing.

Video: ▶ [Joan Keegan, SNC Assistant Executive Officer](#)



Sierra Nevada Conservancy Special Interest License Plate (Pending)